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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT FOR SADR'S
STEAMROLLERS

REF: A. BAGHDAD 2448 (SADR STATEMENTS)
[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 666 (FREEZE EXTENSION)

Classified By: Deputy Political Counselor Brian Shukan for reasons 1.4
(b, d).

[1](#)1. (C) As reported in Ref A, Muqtada al-Sadr's July 28 public statement divided his Jaysh al-Mehdi (JAM) militia into two groups: an unarmed group that performs "thought jihad" and an armed resistance cell to battle "the Occupation." On August 5, the Sadrism movement issued a six-page pamphlet that purports to explain the purpose and function of the unarmed group that goes by the name of "al-Mumahidoon" which, in the JAM context, can best be translated as "The Steamrollers" or "Ones Who Pave the Way." According to prominent Shia religious scholar Sheikh Fateh Kashif al-Ghita, Sadr's choice of the term "al-Mumahidoon" - used traditionally to describe those who prepare the Shia masses for the return of the "Hidden Imam" Mehdi and used more recently by Iran's Khomeini as code for those who support the "Wilayat al-Faqih" concept of a theological state - fits in neatly with Sadr's attempt to re-brand the JAM as a "social and religious" entity instead of a glorified death squad, and to re-cast himself as a religious leader rather than a rabble-rouser. Indeed, just as he did in his July 28 statement, Sadr uses the title of Hujjat al-Islam which identifies him as a senior Shia scholar who has achieved an advanced state of theological learning.

[1](#)2. (C) Issued under "the educational auspices of Jaysh al-Mehdi" and entitled "al-Mumahidoon," the pamphlet features a cover portrait of Muqtada's father and Sadrism icon Muhammed Sadiq al-Sadr as well as the following mission statement-style quote from Muqtada: "They are the ideological, cultural, religious, and social army responsible for the intellectual and scientific jihad and the liberation of minds, hearts, and bodies from the spread of Western globalization, and they are totally forbidden from using weapons." The pamphlet goes on to outline the goals of the group that include establishing an Islamic state; spreading true Islamic values; and eliminating wrongdoing in a "moral, humanitarian, and heartfelt manner." The organization will be formed from "brothers in Jaysh al-Mahdi" and divided into eight sections: ideological, religious, cultural, social, media, public relations, administrative, and 'follow-up.'" The work of 'al-Mumahidoon' will include: establishing literacy programs; proselytizing at mosques; producing plays, films, and documentaries; providing care for wounded JAM members and the relatives of JAM martyrs; and organizing protests and celebrations. In a separate media interview, Sadrism Trend CoR member MP Ahmed al-Mosa'odi said that Sadr initially imposed a "freeze" on Jaysh al-Mehdi activity to "pull the rug from under the feet of other political parties" and subsequently limited JAM's mission to one of cultural and social resistance as embodied by "al-Mumahidoon."

Comment

¶3. (C) The establishment of "al-Mumahidoon" is the latest episode in Sadr's purported campaign to transform Jaysh al-Mahdi from an armed rabble/mafia-style criminal enterprise into a social and religious organization. The campaign began February 22 when Sadr extended his August 2007 "freeze" on offensive JAM operations for an additional six months with a pronouncement that JAM would begin a period of "doctrinal and psychological transformation" and Sadr's subsequent "corporeal separation" from the hurly-burly that passes for Iraqi politics (Ref B). The extended "freeze" is set to expire on August 16, just a few days before the sacred Shia Shabaaniyah festival in Karbala: last year's festival witnessed a bloody JAM attempt to seize control of Karbala's holy shrines, the event that turned much of the Shia street against the Sadrism Trend and compelled Muqtada to rein in his militia with the "freeze" order. While "al-Mumahidoon" members go about "thought jihad" activities like producing plays and establishing literacy programs, it is worth remembering that Sadr has explicitly stated that he intends to retain an armed resistance cell to wage war against "the Occupation."

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